

10. AGENCY-WIDE VACANCY NOTICE

- References: A) D/Pers memo dated 14 Sep 78, re Vacancy Notice System
- B) D/Pers memo dated 13 Oct 78, re Agency Wide Vacancy Notice System

The DDS&T Management Advisory Panel (STMAP) recently conducted a survey within the Directorate on the Vacancy Notice System. The preliminary results of their findings indicate some (substantial minority) dissatisfaction with the current system in terms of lack of familiarity with policy and inconsistencies and/or inadequacies in implementation. STMAP further theorized, with good justification, that such perceptions could impair the ability to fill vacancies with the best qualified personnel, inhibit efforts to improve placement and/or growth opportunities of individual employees, and, perhaps most importantly, create a belief that employees are dealt with in an inequitable manner. Other complaints centered around poor distribution of vacancy notices and a feeling that in certain cases a candidate had been pre-selected for a position even before a vacancy notice was issued.

Generally, we agree with the Office of Personnel's discussion of this matter in reference A although we feel that OP may be overstating the consequences of more widespread use of vacancy notices by assuming that this will automatically lead to much greater movement of personnel between components. We do not think that this necessarily follows in that, at least in the DDS&T, it is not a lack of knowledge of available vacancies that inhibits their being filled, but rather a lack of qualified personnel in-house to fill them. Nevertheless, we hasten to point out

that any mechanism which results in greater spontaneous movement of personnel across component boundaries works at cross purposes to career planning including promotion scheduling, training, and upward mobility.

In our view, the most sensible approach to filling vacancies would be to give line management the first opportunity to fill a given vacancy from within the component. If this fails, then all employees would be given an opportunity to apply through an Agency-Wide Vacancy Notice System.

If a fully acceptable candidate exists for a vacancy within the subject component, no vacancy notice would be issued -- to do so would waste time and effort and would raise false expectations on the part of other applicants. If no suitable candidate exists, then an Agency-wide vacancy notice should be issued. This would help optimize the use of existing manpower resources and provide employees with a broader view of opportunities available in the Agency. Eliminated under this system would be Sub-Group and Directorate vacancy notice systems and the uncertainty of whether a notice is restricted in terms of intended circulation. Created would be a centralized location for all vacancy notices and a uniform standard for distribution. Employees should be advised of the purpose of these programs and standard policies should be publicized concerning the distribution system, selection procedures, etc.

The additional workload would be difficult to estimate without some indications as to expected volume of applicants generated by this program. We suspect that such a system could be accommodated without overly taxing existing resources.